29 October 1965

OCI No. 0313/65C

Copy No. 51

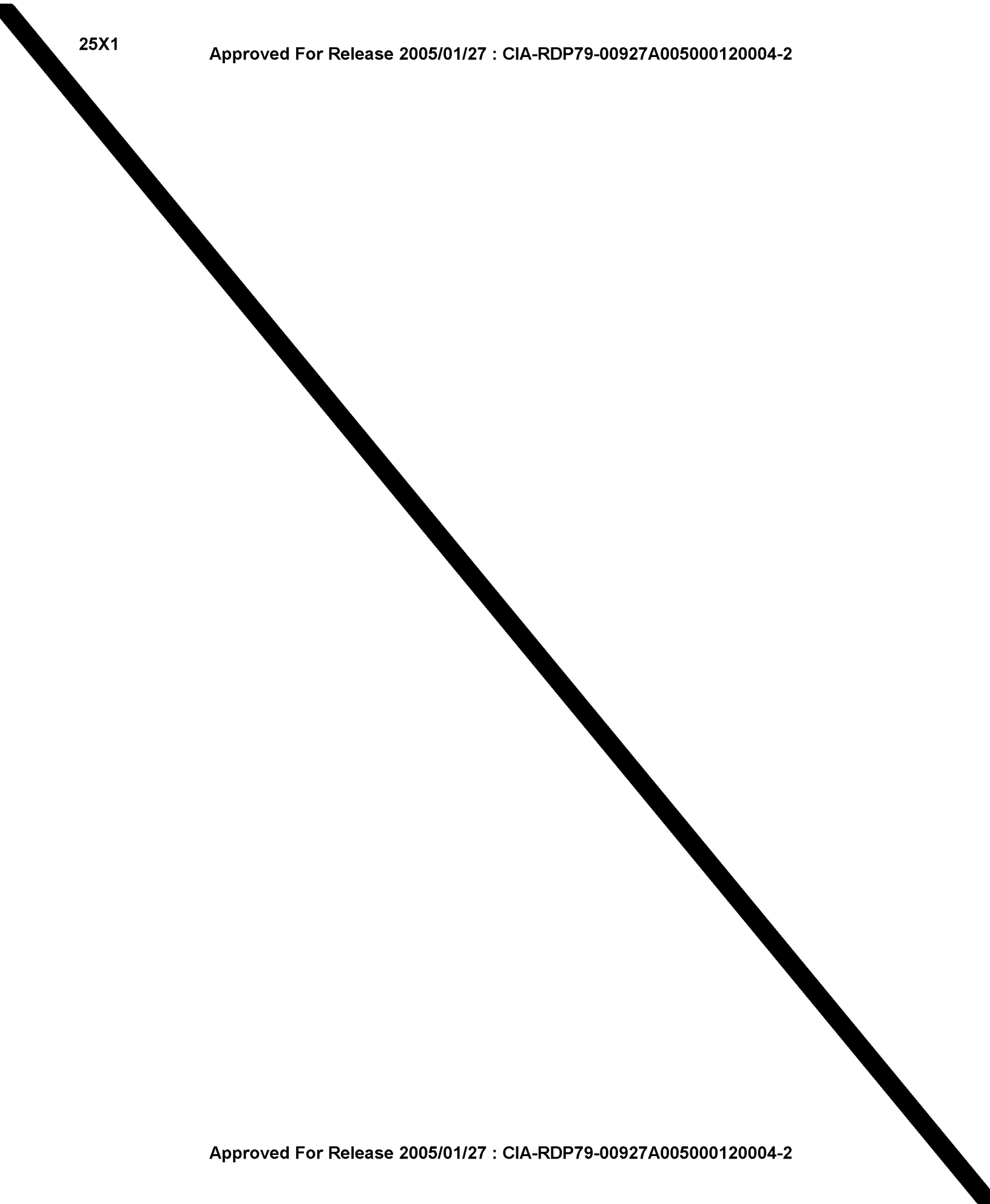
SPECIAL REPORT

MOSCOW IN THE COMMUNIST WORLD A YEAR AFTER KHRUSHCHEV

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE

25X1



Approved For Release 2005/01/27 : CIA-RDP79-00927A005000120004-2

SECRET

MOSCOW IN THE COMMUNIST WORLD A YEAR AFTER KHRUSHCHEV

A year ago, the position of the new Soviet leaders within the Communist world was certainly inauspicious, especially in view of the widespread consternation and protest evoked by the manner of Khrushchev's removal. The Chinese, on the other hand, were riding high on the wave of their first nuclear explosion and the downfall of their archenemy, Khrushchev.

The situation today is considerably altered. The more subtle tactics adopted by Khrushchev's successors have yielded some gains among several foreign parties. The limited improvement in Moscow's position, however, appears to derive not so much from any inherent efficacy in the new Soviet approach, as from Peking's heavy-handed reactions both to recent Soviet tactics and to the frustration of various Chinese foreign policy moves.

The intensity and bitterness with which the contest between Moscow and Peking is being waged is every bit as sharp as was the case under Khrushchev, but the true character of the conflict--a full-scale struggle for world-wide power and influence--has become more manifest.

The New Tactical Line

The ouster of Khrushchev a year ago enabled his successors to take a fresh look at Moscow's position in the Communist world and to reappraise the Soviet approach to the contest with Peking. While the new Soviet leaders were quick to endorse the substantive policies pursued by Khrushchev and condemned by China, they apparently considered his obstinate, flamboyant tactics unnecessary and self-defeating.

The volatile Khrushchev had allowed himself to be goaded into a vociferous, tit-for-tat polemical exchange that, in effect, meant waging the conflict by Peking's rules. Not yielding one iota on matters of principle, Moscow's new rulers nevertheless adopted more subtle tactics in attempting to meet the Chinese challenge.

In essence, the Soviet leaders decided to take forthright measures to shore up their credentials as bona fide, revolutionary Communists, and thereby as far as possible to draw the sting out of Peking's anti-Soviet accusations. Concomitantly the USSR's outward posture toward China was to be kept always "correct," often conciliatory. Hence, the Soviets have generally avoided open and direct criticism of China's policies and, in the face of the continued Chinese assault, have assumed--with few exceptions --the posture of the injured party unwilling to stoop to any response in kind.

Khrushchev's successors almost certainly had no illusions that basic differences with Peking could really be resolved, or even that a cessation of polemics could be secured for any lengthy period. The Chinese,

SECRET

MOSCOW IN THE COMMUNIST WORLD A YEAR AFTER KHRUSHCHEV

"Almost a year has passed since our party adopted a line toward normalization of Soviet-Chinese relations and the re-establishment of unity. Unfortunately, a number of major Soviet moves in this direction have not been supported by the Chinese leaders." (Brezhnev plenum speech, 29 September 1965)

"The new Soviet leaders got rid of Khrushchev because he was too stupid and disreputable...but they took over Khrushchev revisionism in its entirety.... They make certain gestures and play certain tricks to show that they are somewhat different.... Compared with Khrushchev, his successors are practicing a more covert, more cunning, and more dangerous revisionism.... We must be able to deal both with their tough and with their soft tactics." (Peking People's Daily-Red Flag article, 14 June 1965, "Carry the Struggle Against Khrushchev Revisionism Through to the End")

49461

at any rate, quickly made their position clear. At a Kremlin reception only days after Khrushchev's removal, the Chinese ambassador expressed Peking's continuing contempt for the whole "Khrushchev clique," when, with a gesture toward Soviet presidium members, he remarked that "they are all responsible" for difficulties with China. After a brief hiatus Peking resumed its polemical campaign, and once again made clear that its peace terms were no less than unconditional Soviet surrender.

Neither Chou En-lai's visit to Moscow last November nor Kosygin's stopover in Peking in February made any contribution toward reducing Sino-Soviet frictions. In periodic authoritative policy statements, Moscow has reiterated its firm position on issues in dispute with China, and has made it amply clear that the USSR will not permit Peking to dictate Moscow's foreign policy.

The Soviet "Principled" Stand

In their effort to keep their collective record clean by generally avoiding direct criticism of Peking, the present Soviet leaders have at times gone out of their way to endorse those Chinese initiatives and policies that do not conflict with their own interests and that hold some promise of embarrassing the West. Even in so doing, however, Moscow's ambivalent feelings have not been very well concealed.

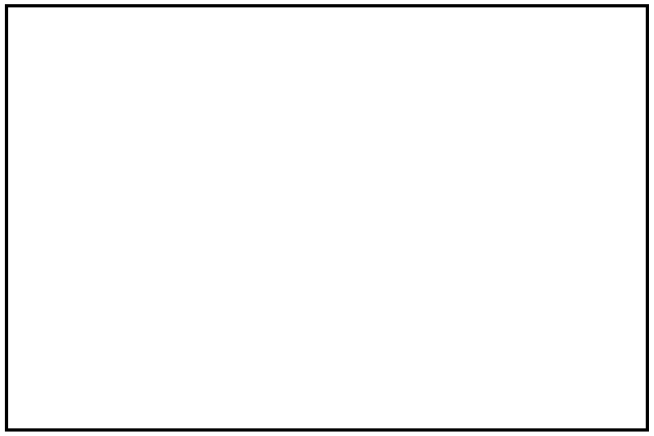
Kosygin's 28 December 1964 letter endorsing China's call for a world summit conference on banning nuclear weapons was, for example, consistent with the general Soviet posture,

[redacted] 25X1

In like manner, Moscow has reaffirmed its public support to Communist China's admission to the UN. [redacted] 25X1

SECRET

25X1



Specific Soviet Ripostes

In specific instances involving a particularly galling Chinese affront, the Soviet leaders have elected to respond forcefully. This has been particularly true when the Russians considered that silence might have been interpreted as a sign of weakness or an admission of guilt, or when they thought that Peking was especially vulnerable to a counterthrust.

Moscow replied aggressively last March, for example, to a Chinese note protesting the alleged "brutal suppression" by Soviet authorities of the Moscow student demonstrations against US "aggression" in Vietnam. More recently, Pravda castigated Peking for letting its party daily be used for anti-Moscow statements by the high-level Kuomintang defector, Li Tsung-jen, "a man for whom the garbage heap of history is the only fitting place." Pointing out that Li is a "great specialist" in anti-Communist activities, having had invaluable experience during his many years as "Chiang Kai'shek's underling."

These Soviet attacks, however, have been the exception rather than the rule. In general, it is clear that the present Soviet leadership has chosen to eschew Khrushchev's notion of pressing full speed ahead with "ideological exposure" of the Chinese.

The All-Party Meeting

Moscow's retreat from its demands for a world Communist conference illustrates the new Soviet approach in the contest for influence within the Communist movement.

Early this year the Soviets, under pressure from several influential foreign parties, downgraded the status of the 19-party meeting that took place from 1 to 5 March in Moscow. Whereas Khrushchev had called for a formal session last December of a 26-party "editorial committee" to prepare an all-party conference, and had made it clear that plans would proceed whether or not the Chinese agreed to attend, his successors postponed the meeting until March, reduced it to a mere "consultative" gathering, and gave special stress to their ostensible hope that all invitees would participate.

The arrangements and procedures surrounding the March meeting were carefully made as innocuous and noncontroversial as possible, in order to assuage such reluctant participants as the Italian and British parties, and to deny Peking further ammunition for its anti-Soviet campaign. Nevertheless, as expected, the Chinese and six other invited parties boycotted the session.

Although the final communiqué endorsed in principle a world Communist meeting, particular emphasis was given to the need for meticulous and obviously prolonged preparations, and the formula which was agreed on--especially the proviso that "all fraternal parties" should participate--gave Peking a virtual veto on this project. Thus, in effect, an all-party conference was postponed sine die.

Nevertheless, the Soviets periodically pay lip service to the conference proposal. On 4 October, for example, presidium member and party secretary Suslov reiterated in familiar terms Moscow's approval of a "world forum of Communists" to take place "after careful and thorough preparation." The Russian leaders apparently feel they cannot afford to let their meeting proposal fall completely by the wayside. Moreover, they seek to exploit Chinese opposition to such a meeting to demonstrate that Peking is not at all interested in resolving interparty differences, and that it fears the views of the "vast majority" of parties.

The failure of the all-party conference proposal was not unexpected, and the present Soviet leaders' policy of relative restraint toward China--although it has proved advantageous in some respects--is patently a poor substitute for the effective instrument the USSR has long sought to use to stem the erosion of Soviet influence in the Communist movement. Moscow's dilemma was pointed out recently by a Rumanian diplomat who commented that although the international party meeting is "now completely dead," he had no idea what means the Soviets would now find to cope with the Chinese. In short, Russia has not yet found a completely satisfactory way to counter Peking without further alienating other foreign parties. The tactics adopted, however, have in practice generally proven a relatively good choice from among an unenviable set of alternatives, and represent at least a far less damaging line than Khrushchev's.

Moscow's "Cunning" Approach

The new Soviet leaders' tactics have enabled them to avoid many of the pitfalls of Khrushchev's approach. His relatively authoritarian and intemperate behavior had alienated many foreign parties by exacerbating their own internal and external problems. The new tactics also have served to shift the focus of the dispute with China away from the intra-Communist organizational infighting characteristic of much of the

earlier conduct of the Sino-Soviet struggle, with the result that the conflict has more manifestly taken on the colors of a full-scale rivalry for world-wide power and influence both within and outside the Communist movement.

Beneath the "correct" and nonpolemical posture assumed by Khrushchev's successors emerged a basic decision to take the Chinese bull by the horns. The Soviets set out to meet Peking's challenge with a set of timely moves designed to disprove oft-repeated anti-Soviet accusations, to make inroads among the Asian parties considered by Peking to be within its own exclusive sphere of influence, and to discredit China before the world. This offensive generally took the form of quiet, behind-the-scenes work, taking advantage of Chinese economic and military weaknesses and political isolation.

This dual approach combining judicious restraint with positive action has incited a torrent of abuse from the Chinese. A possible measure of the relative effectiveness of Moscow's tactics may be seen in Peking's bitter charge that the new Soviet leaders are not only as bad as Khrushchev but "more dangerous." Although the volume and aggressiveness of Chinese attacks have scarcely slackened since Khrushchev's downfall, Peking's outbursts have suggested at times a sense of loss over the disappearance of its favorite whipping boy.

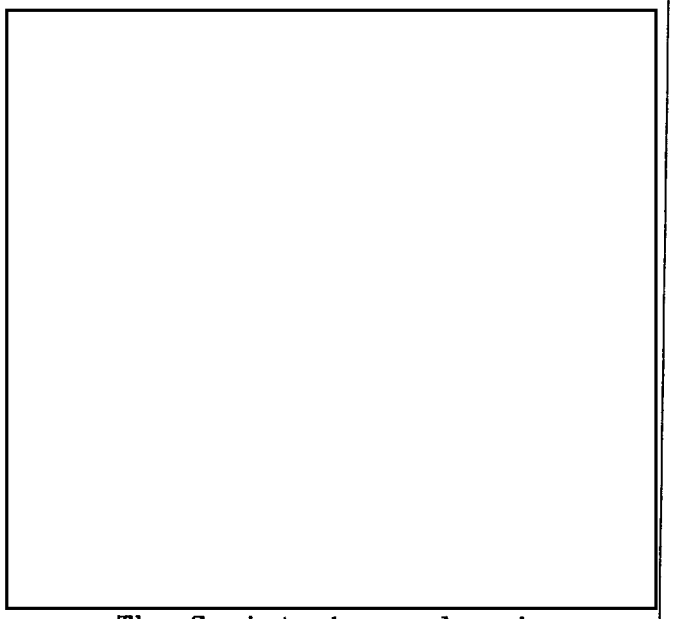
Vietnam: A Pivotal Issue

The Soviet decision to reverse Khrushchev's policy of disengagement from Southeast Asia sprang from a somewhat involved combination of motivations. The new leaders clearly wanted to refurbish the Russian record of opposition to "US imperialism" and at the same time increase Soviet influence at China's expense throughout the Communist movement--particularly in Asia. They also hoped at the time that deeper Soviet involvement in Vietnam would deter the US from escalating the war and enable Moscow to reap political dividends, when Washington was compelled to accept defeat. The dispatch of Kosygin's mission to Hanoi last February was in a very real sense a direct challenge to China.

The situation took a drastic, unanticipated turn in the aftermath of the Pleiku incident and the commencement of US bombing raids over North Vietnam. The Soviets nevertheless made clear their determination to honor their commitment to Hanoi's defense, despite the consequent deterioration in Soviet-US relations. The USSR apparently judges the risks of a direct Soviet-US confrontation in Vietnam to be manageable as long as the scope of Russian involvement is carefully controlled from Moscow.

On balance, the USSR probably considers the risks involved and the current "freeze" in relations with Washington tolerable largely because of the concrete benefits to Moscow's position in the Communist world accruing from its increased involvement in Vietnam.

25X1



The Soviets have already supplied Hanoi with surface-to-air missiles, fighter aircraft, antiaircraft weapons, and other military, economic, and diplomatic support. This aid has not, however, prevented Chinese charges of Soviet treachery and cowardice. Nevertheless Moscow probably deems its record to date, together with repeated expressions of "profound gratitude" from Hanoi, evidence enough to render the Chinese allegations rather hollow and harmless, if not counterproductive.

The bitterness of China's reaction to this Soviet policy was shown by the measures it took last spring to obstruct the passage of Soviet military aid to Vietnam. This has given the Soviets a weapon to use in their campaign to discredit the Chinese, and they have used it with effect to demonstrate the lengths to which the Chinese are prepared to go to block Soviet efforts to regain influence among the Asian Communists.

It is in this context that persistent Soviet pleas for Communist unity in support of the Vietnamese should be weighed. Khrushchev himself made various calls for "socialist" solidarity in the face of the growing threat of "imperialism," but his successors have made this the central theme of their many pronouncements. Such appeals are merely designed to draw the expected rejection from Peking, and thereby lay the blame for continuing intrabloc difficulties squarely on the shoulders of the Chinese leaders.

Soviet - North Korean Relations

Moscow's current tactical line has served to improve its position not only with the North Vietnamese but also with North Korea. It has, in effect, enabled Pyongyang to take a few steps back from Peking toward a position of neutrality in the Sino-Soviet dispute.

North Korea's more cordial tone contrasts rather sharply with the vehement anti-Soviet attacks it launched when Khrushchev was in power. Pyongyang no longer follows Peking's lead in condemning Moscow,

and North Korean propaganda has tended to avoid controversial Sino-Soviet issues since Khrushchev's ouster. The North Koreans, for example, refrained from any comment on the March meeting of 19 Communist parties in Moscow, despite having viciously condemned Khrushchev's efforts last year to convene such a gathering.

Beneath the atmospherics, more tangible indications have appeared suggesting that Soviet-Korean military cooperation has increased over recent months. Last May Moscow announced that an agreement on Soviet military aid had been concluded with North Korea. Later evidence seems to indicate that the USSR may have already resumed certain military aid to Pyongyang, apparently in return for a more forthcoming Korean attitude on intrabloc affairs. Although North Korea received substantial military assistance from the USSR prior to 1961, Soviet aid had been substantially reduced thereafter as Pyongyang moved closer to China's position in the Sino-Soviet dispute.

Role of Latin American Parties

The post-Khrushchev leadership's tactics have also met with some success in Latin America, particularly in Cuba. Only weeks after Khrushchev's overthrow, Brezhnev and Kosygin invited representatives from Latin American parties to Moscow where advance preparations were made for a regional party meeting in Havana in late November 1964. The Havana meeting proceeded according to plan with rather profitable results from Moscow's point of view. The delegates, together with their Cuban hosts, reportedly agreed to the proposition that the only revolutionary movements worthy of support are those approved by the local Communist parties. The final communiqué of the meeting "categorically condemned" factional activities, and demanded an "immediate end" to public polemics. This consensus dealt a blow to divisive Chinese activity in Latin America.

Peking was understandably incensed at the results of the Havana meeting and particularly at Castro's role in the arrangements. The Chinese bitterly criticized the performance of the Cuban party, and in effect wrote off Castro's regime as "revisionist." They also took Cuba to task later for participating in the March meeting in Moscow, to which Castro sent a strong delegation headed by his brother Raul. In sum, China once again reacted explosively to the moderate success achieved by specific Soviet tactics, and in this case was forced to accept its losses in Latin America, including a sharp deterioration in Sino-Cuban relations and, conversely, a relative improvement in Havana's ties with Moscow.

Other Regional Meetings

The Soviets have also found the tactic of promoting regional Communist party meetings helpful in other areas of the world. Largely at Moscow's prompting, gatherings of representatives of parties in Arab countries and of those in Western Europe have been held with aims generally similar to those of the Havana meeting last November. Such gatherings have proven useful in laying down a general line to be pursued by the parties in a given area, in coordinating various joint activities, and in countering factionalism.

Moscow's Pragmatic Adjustments

Elsewhere in the movement the Soviet leaders have shown a readiness to accommodate to current realities and have exhibited a realistic appreciation of the limits both of Soviet influence and of the capabilities of various foreign parties outside the bloc.

The treatment of the September visit to Moscow of Rumanian party chief Ceausescu, for example, gave further evidence of the Soviet leaders' adjustment to Rumania's nationalistic tendencies, and their determination to work toward improving the atmosphere of relations with Bucharest. They recognize that any attempt to reverse the tide of nationalism in Rumania would almost certainly be self-defeating. As long as Soviet national interests are not placed in jeopardy by some precipitate Rumanian move such as abrupt withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact, Moscow appears reconciled to this emerging trend. Even before his Moscow visit, Ceausescu remarked that a "favorable change" in the Soviet attitude toward Bucharest is indicated both by an increasing show of respect for Rumanian leaders and a cessation of "rude interference in Rumanian affairs."

As in the Rumanian experience, Russian acquiescence has generally served to calm ruffled tempers in other neighboring Communist states. Moscow's caution, its almost deferential outward attitude toward the East European leaders is reflected in the treatment accorded the recent parade of luminaries visiting Moscow and in Brezhnev's recent weekend visits to Warsaw and Prague. The Soviet attitude may in part stem from Khrushchev's successors' early preoccupation with assuaging the outspoken consternation in Eastern Europe over the way Khrushchev's ouster was handled.

The Russians, however, have had to pay a price for reduced friction between Moscow and the parties in Eastern Europe and elsewhere. The Soviets' willingness to accept a greater degree of independence among their supporters has inevitably led to a further erosion of Russian influence and control. Soviet acquiescence--however reluctant--has made it increasingly clear that, in opposing the Chinese line, foreign parties are no longer forced to accept subservience to Moscow as an unavoidable concomitant.

In Western Europe and the Middle East the Soviets continue to encourage local Communist parties to take steps to end their isolation and secure a broader popular base. Hence foreign Communists are advised to join with other "progressive forces"--be they Social Democrats or quasi-charismatic nationalist leaders--in a united front to achieve common objectives, and thereby enhance local Communist power and influence. Such parties remain generally responsive to Soviet counsel and support in conditions where Peking's line of armed revolution has but limited appeal.

The Afro-Asian Conference

Moscow's decision to meet aggressively--albeit nonpolemically--China's challenge on key international issues, and not merely those confined to intra-Communist squabbling, has also earned some dividends. In adamantly opposing Soviet participation in the oft-postponed Second Afro-Asian Conference, Peking had thrown down the gauntlet. After some limited attempts to rally support for Soviet attendance, Khrushchev had, in effect, conceded defeat just two months before his ouster. The new Soviet leaders, however, took up the challenge and their subsequent diplomatic campaign, aided by some unusually heavy-handed Chinese behavior as well as by a series of fortuitous events, resulted in a rebuff to China on this issue. Moscow has some reason to hope that its vigorous riposte to the Chinese challenge and the vicious Chinese reaction have gone a long way toward discrediting China in much of the underdeveloped world.

The Indo-Pakistani Conflict

Moscow's clear--though still indirect--criticism of China's behavior in the face of the Indian-Pakistani hostilities added an important voice to the international chorus denouncing the Chinese role. During the most recent crisis over Kashmir, the USSR demonstrated that it will not be deterred by the threat of Chinese accusations from taking action to safeguard its paramount national interests and policies--in this case, toward the Indian subcontinent. Moscow is well aware that Peking hardly needs a plausible pretext before emitting blatant charges of Soviet cooperation with "US imperialism."

With this in mind the Soviets set out to dampen down the hostilities on the subcontinent and endorsed the various UN Security Council resolutions toward this end, despite severe Chinese criticism. Moscow appears relatively satisfied with the outcome to date, especially with the further loss of prestige suffered by China.

Crisis in Indonesia

Preliminary indications from the current turmoil in Indonesia suggest that another

setback to Chinese policy may be in the offing. Moscow would look with satisfaction on the situation should it prove to become the latest--and possibly the most dramatic--step in the trend toward increasing Chinese isolation. The Soviets can also be expected, at least in private, to point to any losses suffered by the pro-Chinese Indonesian Communist Party as clear proof of the disastrous results which flow from the Peking's precipitate and "adventurist" policy.

Prospect

The subtle yet aggressive tactics which Brezhnev and Kosygin have used against the Chinese have brought limited but tangible gains for Moscow, and have put Peking somewhat on the defensive. The strong Chinese challenge continues to do serious harm to Moscow's position but the damage has been diminished, some of the pitfalls of Khrushchev's behavior avoided, and the Soviet position buttressed. The USSR's moderate success will probably shore up the present Soviet leaders' will to resist any foreign or domestic pressure for an early change in their new approach to interparty affairs.

25X1

* * *